

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 IO-13 /072 W

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P R 100855Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7173

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2912

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, MY, XF

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ROMULO BRIEFS GOM ON PHILIPPINE MUSLIM
PROBLEM DURING BRIEF STOPOVER

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 2853 DTG 090320Z MAY 77

(B) MANILA 7000 DTG 090835Z MAY 77 (NOTAL)

(C) KUALA LUMPUR 2798 DTG 050838Z MAY 77

1. PHILIPPINE FOREIGN MINISTER ROMULO AND HIS PARTY MADE A BRIEF
STOPOVER IN KUALA LUMPUR MAY 9 WHILE ON THEIR WAY TO TRIPOLI IN ORDER
TO BRIEF MALAYSIAN LEADERS ON CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN NEGOTIATIONS
ON THE PHILIPPINE MUSLIM PROBLEM AND THE GOP POSITION ON THE RECENT
BREAKDOWN IN TALKS. ALTHOUGH DETAILS ARE LACKING, PRESS ACCOUNTS
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CITED UNIDENTIFIED GOM SOURCES AS INDICATING ROMULO'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO

OBTAIN GOM SUPPORT FOR GOP AT FORTHCOMING ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS'
CONFERENCE IN TRIPOLI. ROMULO MET WITH PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN
FOR OVER AN HOUR AND LATER MET SEPARATELY WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER

DATUK AMAR ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD. STATEMENT RELEASED IN ROMULO'S NAME

SAID VISIT WAS MADE IN CONTEXT OF "OUR CONSTANT ENDEAVOR AND REGULAR PRACTICE" (SIC) TO KEEP FOLLOW ASEAN MEMBERS FULLY INFORMED ON PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, TALKS ALSO TOUCHED ON ASEAN MATTERS INCLUDING COMING ASEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN SINGAPORE AND AUGUST KUALA LUMPUR ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING, AND ROMULO REPORTEDLY BRIEFED DATUK HUSSEIN ON THE RECENT FUKUDA/MARCOS MEETING.

2. KAMARUDDIN ABU, MFA CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, TOLD EMBOFFS AT DEPARTURE OF AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL THIS NOON THAT ROMULO WOULD NOT BE GOING TO TRIPOLI AS SOME PRESS REPORTS INDICATED BECAUSE HE WAS NOT INVITED TO THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, BUT WOULD PROBABLY VISIT JIDDA TO GET SUPPORT FROM THE SAUDIS. WITHOUT GIVING DETAILS, KAMARUDDIN CHARACTERIZED ROMULO'S DISCUSSIONS WITH DATUK HUSSEIN AS VERY FRANK AND FRIENDLY ON BOTH SIDES. HE SAID THAT BOTH MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA HAD BEEN DEPT OUT OF THE PICTURE BY GOP'S DECISION TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH QUDHAFI, BUT THAT THEY CONTINUED TO BE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING THAT THEY COULD TO HELP. ONE THING THAT THEY FEEL IS IMPORTANT, HE NOTED, IS THAT THE CEASE FIRE IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES SHOULD CONTINUE AND THIS ROMULO PROMISED THEM WOULD BE THE CASE. WITH REGARD TO THE TRIPOLI CONFERENCE, KAMARUDDIN SAID THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE SAUDIS AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE

MUSLIM STATES WOULD DICTATE THE CONFERENCE'S APPROACH TO THE PHILIPPINE PROBLEM.

3. COMMENT. WE ARE PUZZLED BY STATEMENT IN REFTEL B THAT NEITHER MALAYSIA NOR INDONESIA "HAS BEEN AT ALL INCLINED TO ASSUME MINDANAO

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PEACE-MAKER'S ROLE," SINCE THE INDICATIONS WE SEE HERE ARE THAT THE GOM AND THE GOI DO NOT WANT MORE TROUBLE IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES BUT FEEL THEIR ATTEMPTS TO ACT AS CONCILIATORS WERE PREEMPTED BY GOP'S APPEALS TO THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE FOLLOWED BY ITS DIRECT CONTACTS WITH LIBYA. LOOKED AT FROM A KUALA LUMPUR PERSPECTIVE, MALAYSIA HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE PATIENCE AND GOOD WILL DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS DURING WHICH, PHILIPPINE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS NOTWITHSTANDING, IT APPEARS TO HAVE ALMOST COMPLETELY ATTENUATED IF NOT ELIMINATED SUPPORT THROUGH SABAH FOR THE INSURGENTS. IF MARCOS WOULD ONLY MAKE GOOD ON WHAT SEVERAL SOURCES AT THE BALI CONFERENCE REPORTED WAS HIS PROMISE TO RENOUNCE THE SABAH CLAIM MALAYSIAN SYMPATHY AND ASSISTANCE WOULD PROBABLY BE EVEN GREATER. DILLON

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